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Media Advisory: Impeachment Seems Unlikely; Face the Music; Lessons From History

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Contact: Pam Huber, huber@udayton.edu

MEDIA ADVISORY

A number of University of Dayton faculty members are available to talk about the impeachment actions against President Bill Clinton.

IMPEACHMENT SEEMS UNLIKELY — With 55 Republicans in the Senate, Gerald Kerns, professor of political science at the University of Dayton, says it's unlikely the Senate will get the 67 votes needed for impeachment. "I don't see it at the moment," he says.

A presidential censure may prove difficult as well, says Kerns, explaining that a censure requires a majority vote and the president's signature. A censure, last used against President Andrew Jackson, can mean anything the legislators want it to — ranging from a written expression of disapproval to a monetary fine, Kerns says.

Call **Gerald Kerns** at UD at (937) 229-3650 or at home in Mason, Ohio, at (513) 398-6581.

FACE THE MUSIC — President Clinton's most attractive course in the impeachment proceedings would be to face a simple majority vote on his culpability, says the Rev. John S. Putka, S.M., a political science lecturer at the University of Dayton.

"He should go through the trial and have an up-or-down vote on guilt or innocence," says Putka, noting Senate jurors will not have enough votes (67) to remove him and that censure is less attractive politically and historically than a trial that results in acquittal.

"I don't understand why the president seems to be temporizing, because, by all accounts, he would easily win," Putka says. "It would be in his own interest to go to trial, not argue his case and then face the vote. He could then say, 'Look, I've been acquitted. I've been vindicated.' And go on from there."

Accepting censure, as the Clinton administration is pushing for, would greatly weaken the president's influence in the nation's capital during the rest of his term, Putka says.

"You'd have a substantially impaired president who has lost a lot of his political capital in both parties while trying to govern the country," Putka explains. "This is a problem he's had for the last year."

Call **Father John Putka** at UD at (937) 229-2594 or at home at (937) 229-4815.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY — The impeachment proceedings unfolding in Washington, D.C., have happened only once before in the nation's history. Erving E. Beauregard, professor emeritus of history, is the author of a 1989 biography of John A. Bingham, who served as chief prosecutor for the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson in 1868. Johnson was acquitted twice — by one vote each time — by the Senate.

Bingham, an Ohioan, faced both acclaim and censure from the American people. "Some felt he was too flashy, but he did receive cheers when he was speaking," Beauregard says. During his career, Bingham also wrote the 14th Amendment (due process) and sponsored the appointment of George Custer to West Point.

For media interviews, call **Erving Beauregard** at UD at (937) 229-3415 or at home at (937) 372-4407.